

As a deaf person who depends on captioning to understand television programs, I am very concerned about the decline in the quality of captioning I have observed over the last couple of years.

This decline is especially apparent in news programs which are captioned live. For example, I watch Washington D.C.'s local NBC news (channel 4) each morning. The quality of the captioning varies widely, from pretty good to downright awful. Some mornings it seems like every third or fourth word is wrong. This is also true of the news programs on other channels. My wife, who is hearing, tells me that whole sentences are sometimes left uncaptioned, and other times the captioner leaves out a word like "not" which can change the entire meaning of a sentence. The quality of the captioning is important to our understanding of television programs.

The number of captioned programs has greatly increased over the last few years, and deaf people like myself are deeply appreciative of this. However, the increase in quantity has been accompanied by a decrease in quality of captioning, especially live captioning.

All too often broadcasters go with the cheapest possible captioning service, regardless of the quality of that service. The FCC needs to step in with some kind of mechanism that will measure quality of captioning. Just saying a program is captioned is not enough.